

US EPA RECORDS CENTER REGION 5



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Griffith plant says charges create panic

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GRIFFITH — Allegations made about operations at American Chemical Service, 420 S. Colfax St., have created an unfounded "environmental panic," officials of the chemical reclamation company say.

The company's position was contained in a letter read at the Town Board meeting Tuesday night.

"American Chemical Service is presently under no court order to comply or in violation of any local, state or federal law that we know of," the letter addressed to town trustees stated.

"However, we are sure somewhere, someone is working on a new set of regulations for us to comply with," the letter added in reference to the seemingly continual change in environmental standards during the past 10 years.

American Chemical Service became a topic of discussion at the Town Board level in early August when southside precinct committeeman George Milne said his constituents were concerned about the chemical plant's past landfill practices, its disposal of chemicals into the town's sanitary sewer and compliance with federal requirements for licensing.

"Armed with copies of routine correspondence between American Chemical Service and the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), a few misguided residents have sought to create an environmental panic," the American Chemical Service letter stated in its introduction.

Milne asked town trustees for a copy of the American Chemical letter so he could study it. "I will be back at the next meeting (Oct. 6) to respond," Milne said.

Town Board member Patricia chaadt said town officials are

satisfied with the quality of American Chemical's operation. She said neither the EPA nor the laboratory testing water samples near the plant has indicated there is any need for alarm.

Regarding the past landfill practices, the American Chemical letter said that in October 1980 it had complied with an EPA order for a landfill area closed off in 1975 to be better sealed.

Drums containing solidified paint wastes in bulk and partially filled drums are in the ACS landfill, which hasn't been active in more than five years.

The erosion in the wall of the fill area has been caused by heavy rains and will be corrected with re-grading later this month, the letter said.

American Chemical Service's letter also said there is no sign of chemical leakage from the eroded area.

Milne had expressed concern that firm's use of the town sewer system could damage the system if wastes with excessively high acidity were discharged into it.

In response, the letter said that the company has used the town's sewage system for 10 years with "no detectable damage to the sewer within our plant."

To resolve any question about how acidic the plant's sewage discharge is, the company is in the process of installing a continuous 24-hour metering device.

Milne also had complained of a lack of fencing at the plant, which he said was required after an EPA inspection Dec. 4, 1980.

The purpose of the inspection was to determine if the company was suitable for licensing as a recycler of used solvents under new federal regulations.

American Chemical Service officials reported that the fencing was completed earlier this month and "we now expect to be licensed."